

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-14

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DRAFTED BY IO:CWMAYNES:OM

APPROVED BY IO:CWMAYNES

WHITE HOUSE: PBOURNP

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, PLAB, ILO

SUBJECT: WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ILO: CONVERSATION WITH ILO
DIRECTOR GENERAL BLANCHARD

1. WHITE HOUSE ADVISOR PETER BOURNE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
MAYNES, AND ECOSOC AMBASSADOR WELLS CALLED ON ILO DIRECTOR
GENERAL BLANCHARD AT 3:00 P.M. NOVEMBER 1 TO CONVEY TO HIM
U.S. DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ILO. BLANCHARD, AL-
THOUGH UNDERSTANDABLY UPSET, RECEIVED THE NEWS WITH CON-
SIDERABLE RESTRAINT AND DIGNITY. HE SAID HE WOULD COOP-
ATE WITH THE U.S. OUTSIDE OF THE ORGANIZATION IN WHATEVER
WAY APPROPRIATE.

2. MAYNES AND BOURNE OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY EXPRESS-
ING THIS ADMINISTRATION'S GREAT RELUCTANCE TO TAKE THE DE-
CISION REACHED. IT WAS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT DECISION FOR
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THE PRESIDENT TO MAKE. MAYNES underscored that the U.S.
APPRECIATED THE CONSIDERABLE CONTRIBUTIONS THE ILO HAD MADE
OVER THE YEARS IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR POLICY.
HOWEVER, THE JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE IN PARTICULAR HAD BEEN A
GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE USG AND THE CONFERENCE'S DE-
CISION -- ONLY THE SECOND IN 60 YEARS -- NOT TO ACCEPT THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS HAD BEEN AN ESPECIALLY DEVASTATING BLOW.
MAYNES STATED THAT, IN REACHING ITS DECISION, THE USG

WISHED TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
FOR THE EFFORTS HE PERSONALLY HAD MADE IN RECENT MONTHS
TO TRY TO RESOLVE SOME OF THE SENSITIVE ISSUES TROUBLING
THE ORGANIZATION.

2. BLANCHARD REPLIED QUIETLY BUT FIRMLY THAT HE BELIEVED
THE U.S. WAS MAKING A GREAT MISTAKE. WE WERE LETTING DOWN
OUR WESTERN ALLIES, WE WERE ABANDONING AN ORGANIZATION IN
WHICH, THE WESTERN COUNTRIES, IN FACT, ENJOYED MORE IN-
FLUENCE THAN IN ANY OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, EX-
CEPT THE WORLD BANK AND THE IMF. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE
U.S. DECISION TO WITHDRAW HAD STARTED IN 1954 WHEN THE
SOVIET UNION ENTERED. SOME ELEMENTS OF AMERICAN LABOR AND
BUSINESS HAVE NEVER RECONCILED THEMSELVES TO THIS DEVELOP-
MENT.

3. BLANCHARD SAID THAT THE U.S. DECISION WOULD INVOLVE A
REDUCTION OF 300 INDIVIDUALS ON THE ILO STAFF. HE WANTED
TO PROTECT THE STAFF AS MUCH AS HE COULD AND WOULD TRY TO
DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM THROUGH EARLY RETIREMENT. (IN A
LATER PRESS INTERVIEW, BLANCHARD SAID PUBLICLY THAT HE
WOULD NOT RETALIATE AGAINST THE MORE THAN 900 AMERICANS
WORKING IN THE SECRETARIAT.) ACCORDING TO BLANCHARD, THE
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ILO BUDGET WOULD BE REDUCED BY 19.2 PER CENT AS A RESULT OF
THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL. HE WAS NOT PROPOSING A FULL 25 PER
CENT REDUCTION. IN MAKING THE CUTS, HE WOULD TAKE SPECIAL
EFFORTS TO PROTECT MORE VITAL PROGRAMS LIKE WORKERS' EDU-
CATION AND THE ILO PROGRAM THRUST IN THE FIELD OF BASIC
HUMAN NEEDS -- "A THRUST NOW FAVORED BY YOUR PRESIDENT."
BLANCHARD SAID THAT HE HAS AUTHORITY TO MAKE THESE CUTS
WITHOUT RESORTING TO A SPECIAL SESSION PRIOR TO THE REGULAR
JUNE 1978 CONFERENCE.

4. BLANCHARD COMMENTED THAT HIS PRINCIPAL REGRET WAS THE
WAY HE HAD RECEIVED THE NEWS. HE HAD LEARNED THE PRESIDENT'S
DECISION BY BUYING THE NEW YORK TIMES AT 11:00 P.M. MONDAY
EVENING. MAYNES ASSURED THE DG THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD NOT
INTENDED THIS TO HAPPEN AND THAT MAYNES HAD ASKED FOR THE
MEETING WITH BLANCHARD TO INFORM HIM PRIOR TO RELEASE OF
THE NEWS BY THE WHITE HOUSE.

5. MAYNES NOTED THAT SECRETARY MARSHALL'S STATEMENT MEN-
TIONED THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE WILLING TO RETURN TO THE
ILO PROVIDED CERTAIN ACTIONS WERE TAKEN AND THAT THE U.S.
INTENDED TO FOLLOW ILO EVENTS CAREFULLY. MAYNES ASKED

BLANCHARD IN THIS CONNECTION FOR HIS ADVICE ON VARIOUS OPTIONS OPEN TO THE U.S. REGARDING ANY FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE USG AND THE ILO IN THE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES. BLANCHARD SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THIS QUESTION AND RETURN TO US.

6. MAYNES NOTED THAT SOME DELEGATIONS HAVE SPOKEN OF A SPECIAL SESSION TO ADDRESS THE REPORT WHICH WAS NOT ADOPTED BY THE JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE. BLANCHARD COMMENTED THAT NOTHING WAS IMPOSSIBLE. HE WAS NOT AGAINST A SPECIAL SESSION IN PRINCIPLE. BUT IT WAS EXTREMELY CONFRONTATIONAL AND MIGHT NOT PRODUCE THE RESULTS THAT THOSE WHO SUPPORT IT WOULD HOPE TO SEE. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD EXPLORE DEVELOPMENTS IN GENEVA ON THIS ISSUE AND REPORT BACK TO US.

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7. BLANCHARD CLOSED THE MEETING BY ASKING THAT MAYNES CONVEY TO SECRETARY VANCE HIS RESPECT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE VERY UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHETIC RECEPTION WHICH THE SECRETARY HAD GIVEN HIM SOME WEEKS AGO. BLANCHARD SAID THAT HE REGARDED THAT MEETING AS A GENUINE EFFORT BY THE UNITED STATES TO ENGAGE IN REAL COMMUNICATION WITH HIM ABOUT THE PROBLEMS HIS ORGANIZATION FACED. HE SAID HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF SHOULD HAVE ALLOWED HIM AS THE SENIOR ILO OFFICIAL TO MAKE THE CASE BEFORE THIS DECISION WAS TAKEN BECAUSE IT WILL HAVE SUCH MAJOR CONSEQUENCES FOR THE UN SYSTEM AND FOR THE U.S. IMAGE IN THE WORLD, BUT HE DID UNDERSTAND THE OTHER DEMANDS ON THE PRESIDENT'S TIME. VANCE

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